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FOR CA/EX AND EUR/EX

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SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR A NEW CONSULAR AGENCY -- COLOGNE

REF: DUESSELDORF 13

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¶1. Summary: Mission requests the establishment of a new consular agency to be located in Cologne, North-Rhine Westphalia (NRW), the most populous and politically and economically important state in Germany. The American Citizen Services (ACS) unit of the U.S. Consulate General Duesseldorf will cease operations o/a June 29, 2007, leaving an estimated 20,000 resident American citizens and hundreds of thousands of visitors without local support in case of emergency as well as for routine services. After that date, services for American citizens in NRW will be provided by Consulate General Frankfurt.

A Consular Agent in Cologne will assist Frankfurt to absorb the subsequent increase in ACS workload and be responsible for tasks such as prison visits, welfare/whereabouts checks, and services related to Amcit deaths which are more economically, effectively and efficiently handled locally. The agency would be located in office space provided rent-free in the same building as the successor institution to the America House in Cologne being established by a coalition of German partners. This cable has been coordinated with Embassy Berlin and Consulate General Frankfurt. End Summary.

NRW Statistics

¶2. There are 10,688 American citizen residents registered with authorities in NRW and estimates including dual nationals approximate 20,000. There are some 640 American companies in NRW. State authorities registered more than 170,000 Amcits visitors to NRW in 2006 (using hotel and airport immigration records), but the number is far larger, given the enormous number of persons who arrive by other means and stay privately. There are currently 25 direct, non-stop flights weekly to the U.S. from Duesseldorf and Koeln/Bonn airports, and another major airline plans to start daily direct service in early June. More than a thousand Americans study as exchange students in NRW high schools and universities each year. NRW hosts more than 100 leading international trade fairs with thousands of U.S. exhibitors every year.

¶3. Statistics taken from the 2006 Consular Workload Statistics System (CWSS) report for Duesseldorf are indicative of workload that would be managed by a Cologne Consular Agency in close coordination with Frankfurt. Duesseldorf received a total of 2,436 passport cases, including 1,294 first time and 190 emergency applications; processed 223 applications for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA) with 200 issued; and provided 1,142 notarial services. There were 54 death cases involving Amcits and another 10 involving shipment of remains to the U.S. of non-citizens; 34 welfare/whereabouts checks; and 11 cases involving hospitalization of Amcits. ACS Duesseldorf provided assistance in eight child custody cases, two other cases related

to the protection of minors, three cases involving Amcits victims of spousal abuse and one victim hospitalized after a violent attack. At present 11 Amcits are incarcerated in nine different NRW jails.

Workload Implications of ACS D|sseldorf Closure

¶4. As a result of CA/EX staffing review and consular realignment, the ACS unit of Consulate General Duesseldorf will cease operations o/a June 29, 2007. Frankfurt, the nearest consulate general, will provide services previously handled by Duesseldorf. Absorbing this significant increase in ACS workload will require innovative steps by consular management.

¶5. A Consular Agent in Cologne who accepts passport applications and provides notarial services will dramatically reduce the number of persons who must visit Frankfurt ACS. We have informed the national Amcham organization and NRW leadership about the ACS closure. They have taken the news stoically, but Amcham has asked about the possibility of what they call a "very smart postbox" in NRW which would handle the many travel and document-related services their members now receive from Duesseldorf. Amcham would very much welcome a consular agent, some of whose work would be of this nature.

¶6. A consular agent based in NRW would also significantly increase the efficiency of Special Consular Services (SCS). A local agent is best placed to develop NRW contacts and to take best advantage of local social support networks to assist Amcits in need. Proximity is a great advantage when dealing with child custody, death, abuse and other similar sensitive SCS casework. Travel implications are also significant. For example, the drive to the Osnabrueck jail (where an Amcit is incarcerated) from Cologne requires about six hours round-trip; a visit from Frankfurt would require a ten hour drive, probably necessitating an overnight stay. A cost comparison of train tickets to/from Osnabrueck yields a difference of over \$110/trip.

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Proposal for a Cologne Consular Agency

¶7. Before the end of FY2007, America House Cologne (AHK) will cease to be run by the USG and will be transferred to a coalition of German partners who, under the leadership of Cologne Mayor Fritz Schramma, will take over a legacy institution. Mayor Schramma has offered rent-free office space for a consular agency in the AHK successor institution; a well-known location already associated with America and the USG. See reftel for a more complete description of planned restructuring of Consulate General Duesseldorf.

¶8. The quantity of services and number of complex emergency cases anticipated (based on Duesseldorf's 2006 CWSS) support a request for a 36 hour-a-week, 90% agent. The cost in salary and benefits of such an agent is approximately one third the cost of a senior LES. Establishing a Cologne Consular Agency would lessen the pressure on Frankfurt which faces major increases in workload and costs as a result of the closure of the Duesseldorf ACS unit and at the same time demonstrate continued USG commitment to American citizens in NRW. The Cologne Consular Agency would be supervised by Frankfurt.

¶9. Establishment of a Cologne Consular Agency, planned in coordination with the closure of the Duesseldorf ACS unit, transfer of PD staff from AHK, and establishment of an AHK legacy institution, will result in significant savings. As noted above, office space has been offered at no cost to the USG. The idea has strong support from a major partner of ours, Cologne Mayor Schramma. Expenditures for security upgrades, space renovations, furniture, installation of telephone lines,

and other make ready costs will be minimal. Equipment in the consular agent toolkit, such as computer and printer, may be transferred from excess CA equipment resulting from the closure of ACS Duesseldorf.

¶10. Estimated start-up costs are:

Desktop copier	USD 350	
Answering machine	50	
Shredder		400
Phone/internet line transfer	80	
Cellular phone		60

Total CA start-up cost: USD 940

FSI training	USD 5,000	
Office supplies		250

Total post/program start-up cost: USD 5,250

¶11. Estimated recurring costs (calculated annually) are:

Salary (FZ-90 step 1)	USD 32,278	
FICA (7.65%)		2,469
Health insurance (7.75%)	2,500	
Cellular phone service		720
Phone/internet service		900

Total annual CA (through MRV funding request) cost: USD 38,867

Travel (incl. supervisory)	USD 2,500	
Office supplies		750

Total annual post/program cost: USD 3,250

Comment

¶12. The establishment of a new consular agency in Cologne is an efficient, cost effective strategy for Frankfurt to manage the increased workload associated with the closure of the ACS unit in Duesseldorf. It also reflects the importance of a consular presence in Germany's most populous state. Statistics demonstrate that the many American citizen residents and visitors requiring ACS assistance in NRW justify a consular agency in Cologne. An agent located within the state can more efficiently handle the large volume of sensitive and complex SCS casework in NRW. In addition, the cost of maintaining a consular agent in Cologne would be less than the cost of an additional LES in Frankfurt to absorb added ACS workload. The unique opportunity to locate an agent in the AHK legacy institution, at significant savings to the USG, makes the proposal to establish a consular agency in Cologne all the more attractive.

BOYSE